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New York

Chairman: Mr. Alyaksandr Sychou ..... (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 60 to 81 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Berdennikov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation's congratulations to you on your election, Sir, to the important post of Chairman of the First Committee are not just a traditional tribute or a demonstration of courtesy. We welcome you as a high-ranking official, a professional of established authority and a representative of Belarus, a country with which Russia maintains particularly close relations and which is making a great contribution to international security and disarmament. Belarus's contribution is rightfully being singled out by many delegations at the current session of the General Assembly.

You can count on the full cooperation of the Russian delegation in carrying out your difficult task. We are convinced that the positive interaction of delegations and the methodical work of the First Committee's Bureau will help you carry it out with success.

Although humankind is going through a very trying time, a real transition is being made from bloc confrontation to multipolarity, economic interdependence and the democratization of international relations. Although this trend is not universal, and although it can sometimes be a bumpy ride along Nevsky Prospekt, as we say, current developments are especially important for the fruitful work of the First Committee in building up the United Nations multilateral potential and gradually strengthening security and developing the disarmament process.

One of the pivotal components of the current strategy must by a programme of disarmament, security and stability geared towards the twenty-first century. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation play an important role in such a strategy.

We are willing to make systematic and consistent efforts, together with all other nuclear-weapon States, to reduce nuclear weapons at the global level with the ultimate aim of eliminating this type of weapon, and we are willing to cooperate with all States in achieving general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

The conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was an historic landmark. We agree with the Secretary-General's appraisal of the instrument and are convinced, first, that this document will free humankind forever from the threat of nuclear explosions in any environment; secondly, that it makes an effective contribution to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and provides a way for Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to implement the relevant decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT; thirdly, that it is a comprehensive ban without threshold on all nuclear explosions and will surely and effectively obstruct the qualitative improvement in nuclear charges; and fourthly, that it will be a starting point and effective catalyst to the negotiation process with a view to further reducing nuclear weapons until they are ultimately eliminated.

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We note with satisfaction that more than 120 States have already signed the CTBT. We hope that the Treaty will be signed by all countries, including those with the capacity to develop nuclear weapons and whose signature is of major importance, particularly in ensuring the Treaty's entry into force. Universal adherence to the Treaty will forever spare humankind from another nuclear explosion.

We fully agree with the view expressed here by many delegations that it is intolerable that the CTBT should be approached from a position of "all or nothing".

The CTBT relates specifically to a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. It is not an agreement to ban the development and improvement of nuclear weapons, which would have given it a different scope and required a different verification system. It is not correct, therefore, to expect the CTBT to do the work of another treaty on which there has been no negotiation.

I would like to draw the attention of those who oppose the Treaty to the fact that it will objectively promote a gradual transition to nuclear disarmament on a multilateral basis. The proposal put forward by Russia's President, Boris Yeltsin, to conclude a treaty on nuclear security and stability with the participation of all nuclear Powers pursues the same goal. We once again call upon the States concerned to start an exchange of views on this issue.

We would also remind the Committee of our proposal aimed at ensuring that nuclear arsenals are deployed only in the territory of the corresponding nuclear Powers. We support the initiative of Belarus along this line and share the opinion expressed by the representative of Mexico on the importance of implementing it as soon as possible. In this connection, we should note that all nuclear weapons deployed in the territory of Ukraine have this year been completely withdrawn and taken to the Russian Federation to be destroyed. We also note the statement made here that a similar withdrawal from Belarus would be completed in the near future.

Russia highly appreciates the consensus decision taken last year at the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to make the Treaty permanent. This decision, along with the conclusion of the CTBT, strongly consolidates the foundations of international stability and security and creates better prospects for us successfully to move forward in the area of disarmament.

Russia believes that it is time to do our utmost to hold a successful first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference scheduled for the year 2000.

Russia has vigorously supported and continues to support the fruitful activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the areas of non-proliferation and the development of international cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

If we are to strengthen the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, we must also find a reliable way of preventing the illicit traffic of fissile material. The Moscow Summit on Nuclear Safety and Security has made a major contribution to solving this problem. United Nations Member States should be involved in implementing the Moscow Summit agreements.

One of these agreements concerns a ban on dumping radioactive waste at sea. We are willing to support a consensus draft resolution on this issue, which should, of course, refer to the role of the Moscow Summit in arriving at a consensus on the substance of the matter.

We are sure that the potential of the Conference on Disarmament, which was so clearly confirmed by the preparation of the CTBT, can and should be used intensively in the interests of taking further practical steps towards disarmament.

In our view, it would be of major importance if the Conference on Disarmament were to launch comprehensive negotiations on the elaboration of a multilateral convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices.

It is common knowledge that Russia has already stopped the production of weapons-grade uranium. The national programme to stop the production of weapons-grade plutonium is to be implemented by 1998.

We favour the inclusion of nuclear disarmament as a separate item on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. We are ready to consider the possibility of establishing various organizational frameworks to discuss the issue, including an appropriate ad hoc committee for negotiations on a ban of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and a possible future examination of the necessary approach and conditions for talks on nuclear disarmament, their stages, dates, participants and so forth.

The reduction of nuclear weapons is an extremely complex and multidimensional process and we would not claim that we can now see all that is involved in fine detail nor that we are in a position to make up a respective timetable or establish an implementation time-frame. In our opinion, this simply confirms the need to initiate a broad dialogue on the whole spectrum of problems in the area. It is especially important to identify the conditions that have to be met if we are to make progress.

In particular, we clearly understand that the emerging possibility, for example, of tactical nuclear weapons and sophisticated conventional arms systems being deployed near our borders in the event of North Atlantic Treaty Organization expansion to the East would change the entire strategic situation, create new conditions and force us to review our approach to arms limitation and disarmament.

The Treaty between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems is of particular importance to the process of nuclear disarmament, a key element of strategic stability and a condition for strategic offensive arms reductions. In this connection, we note with satisfaction that Russia and the United States, with the participation of Belarus, Kazakstan and Ukraine, are pursuing negotiations on the elaboration of agreements on the delimitation of strategic and non-strategic anti-ballistic missiles. The first stage of these negotiations on non-strategic low-velocity anti-ballistic missile systems has been successfully completed. The second stage of negotiations on the delimitation of non-strategic high-velocity anti-ballistic missile systems is under way. The solution of this problem will make an important contribution to the creation of conditions for further reductions of strategic offensive arms against the backdrop of the consolidation of strategic stability and international security.

We are convinced that creating internationally-recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world helps to strengthen peace and security at the global and regional levels and contributes to narrowing the geographical area of nuclear preparations, thus consolidating the non-proliferation regime. It is important that the establishment of such zones in no way violate the generally accepted principle of the full freedom to navigate.

In its willingness to contribute to the effort of African States to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, the Russian Federation decided to sign Protocols I and II to the relevant Treaty signed in Cairo on 11 April 1996. We are also pleased to note that all nuclear-weapon States have subscribed this year to the respective Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga. In our view, it is important that the existing zones set a good example for achieving similar agreements for the Middle East and South Asia.

Given the importance of Security Council resolution 984 (1995), the statements the five nuclear Powers made at its adoption and the need stressed at the NPT Review and Extension Conference to consider further measures for providing the non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT with assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, we believe that such measures could result in the drafting of a legally-binding international instrument. It seems that the time has come to reestablish the Ad Hoc Committee dealing with this issue at the Conference on Disarmament.

As I conclude this statement on our position on nuclear issues, I cannot help noting that, in its Advisory Opinion of 8 July 1996 on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, which has been referred to by many delegations, the International Court of Justice did not come to the conclusion that there was any prohibition in international law of the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

In a consistent stand in support of arms control, disarmament and an ultimate ban on all types of weapons of mass destruction, we believe that the respective limitations and prohibitions should be introduced simultaneously with the creation of objective conditions enjoying the general support of the community of States concerned.

We do not wish to dramatize the situation involving the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, although, of course, what happened in September may affect the approach taken by legislatures in other countries to the ratification of this important Convention. We cannot simply confine ourselves to appeals for ratification of the Convention; a real effort will be needed, including at the Hague negotiations, to remove the well-known concerns of the States regarding one aspect of the Convention or other. As far as Russia is concerned, we will do our utmost to resolve the problems so that the Federal Assembly can ratify the Convention.

Russia supports proposals aimed at consolidating the regime of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

by creating a verification mechanism. We are in favour of encouraging the corresponding negotiations.

At this session, we have witnessed attempts to doctor the balanced results of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, which is known to have adopted an amended Protocol II on mines. The proposals for an expeditious ban on mines, accompanied by the setting of specious dates for the completion of negotiations that have not yet started, really look like an attempt to revise these results.

What are the reasons for this? What has changed since 3 May this year, when the Conference capped its work in Geneva with a consensus? We are confident that, in the long run, decisions will be made only on the basis of common agreement, taking into account the positions and legitimate security concerns of all countries and regions, so as to strengthen overall security and confidence.

In our opinion, the international community can now step up its assistance to States in mine clearance as an integral part of the measures on post-conflict settlement and as a component of humanitarian assistance. In this context, the United Nations has an important role to play in coordinating the efforts of States and regional organizations to implement mine-clearance programmes.

The problem of mine clearance in the conflict zones of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, primarily Abkhazia, is particularly acute and urgent. The Trust Fund for Georgia set up by the United Nations Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 937 (1994) focuses on the solution to this problem.

Russia welcomes the outcome of the May Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). An acceptable solution was found on flank areas. What has to be done now is to exploit the flexibility of the agreed document. The bloc approach embodied in this Treaty has long been outdated. It is important to adapt the Treaty to the new political and military realities. This is a prerequisite for consolidating the viability and efficiency of the CFE Treaty in future. To that end, tangible results should be achieved in this endeavour at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Lisbon summit.

We have a principled approach to transparency in armaments. Since 1993, we have been regularly submitting data to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Concerning information on military holdings and procurements through national production, we believe this requires further work, particularly within the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on the further development of the Register, which is scheduled to meet in 1997.

We are studying the question of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. This would require a consensus on the issues to be taken up at such a session, the framework for realistic decisions to be taken on both issues and the dates on which it should be held. The United Nations Disarmament Commission is in a position to tackle these problems.

In conclusion, I wish to recall that Russia has proposed the convening of a third peace conference in 1999. It appears that the time has come to have a practical discussion of this initiative.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): First, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Kazakstan, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important post of Chairman of the First Committee, as well as the other members of the Bureau. I feel sure that, under your able guidance, we will be able to take mutually acceptable decisions on the important issues before the Committee.

Our delegation has always accorded the greatest attention to the very serious problems that are discussed in the First Committee. I wish to assure you that you can count on the full cooperation of my delegation.

The fifty-first session of the General Assembly is taking place at a particularly important time. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is now open for signature. In connection with this truly historic event, the President of the Republic of Kazakstan, Mr. Nazarbaev, made a special statement that was distributed as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 66 and 71. In his declaration, Mr. Nazarbaev stressed that:

> "The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was a consequence of the positive changes in the international arena in recent years. Kazakstan pays tribute to the enormous amount of work carried out by many States on the road to the Treaty. We note with satisfaction that our country, too, made its contribution

to the preparation of what is one of the most important agreements of this century." (*A/C.1/51/5, p. 2*)

Five years ago, Kazakstan made an historic choice, as noted in the statement, when it put an end to tests of the most dangerous weapons in the history of mankind. Our Head of State took the unprecedented decision to close the operating Semipalatinsk nuclear-test area. As Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Kazakstan strictly abides by its provisions and has consistently followed a policy of non-proliferation of other forms of weapons of mass destruction.

Recently, the last launching facilities for nuclear missiles were destroyed on the territory of Kazakstan. We no longer have nuclear weapons on our territory, although until recently we ranked fourth in the world in this area. It was not an easy process, but Kazakstan did benefit from international cooperation. Today there are many questions on the agenda of the international community that, if resolved, will bring us closer to a nuclear-weapon-free world. These questions include verification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, a ban on the production of fissile material for military purposes and the prevention of illegal trading in nuclear materials.

The efforts of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency in this area have always been supported by Kazakstan. For example, having closed the nuclear-test area, Kazakstan also destroyed its nuclear infrastructure, signed the CTBT and is pursuing its efforts to implement the provisions of the Treaty. Our Head of State made a statement at the session of the Conference on Disarmament on the international monitoring system in Kazakstan.

In noting the great importance of the opening of the CTBT for signature, Kazakstan cannot assert that nuclear testing is a thing solely of the past. The damage it has wrought on people and the environment has yet to be assessed. It is well known that, over the course of over 40 years, 459 nuclear explosions were conducted in Kazakstan, including 113 tests in the atmosphere. Over half a million people in Kazakstan were exposed to radioactivity. Obviously, enormous efforts will have to be made to undo the consequences of nuclear testing in our country. We think that Kazakstan is right to count on assistance from the world community, primarily from the nuclear Powers.

Kazakstan appreciates the work done by the Conference on Disarmament on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Considering the importance of the Conference, we welcome the decision to expand its membership, and we hope that States that have expressed a desire to participate in the work of that authoritative body will be accepted by the Conference.

The extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was one of last year's outstanding events in the area of strengthening the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, there is a clear need to build on this success and to move ahead towards the lofty goal of complete nuclear disarmament. Next year's first session of the preparatory committee for the Review Conference on the NPT is very important. Much work must be done on the establishment of mechanisms for the effective implementation of the Treaty. Of course, very serious attention must be paid to this work.

Kazakstan's participation in the global non-proliferation process is reflected in what we are doing to develop national mechanisms. This year we adopted a law on expert monitoring, which we view as a contribution to the overall effort to avert the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This is an important area. We have tried to simplify our national activities for effective implementation of instruments in the area of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Kazakstan is currently taking the necessary steps to complete its work in respect of the Conventions on chemical weapons and on biological weapons.

Our delegation is pleased to see the gradual progress in the area of monitoring and reduction of conventional weapons, including those that are excessively injurious or have indiscriminate effects. In our view, work on prohibiting the use of anti-personnel mines should continue; high priority should be given to this issue. Instability in many parts of the world shows that monitoring the proliferation of conventional weapons must be strengthened as an important tool for ensuring regional security. In this connection, we regard the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a very important component of such monitoring. Kazakstan supports the Register, and has been providing the necessary information to it since 1992.

As a European and Asian State, Kazakstan attaches particular important to questions of regional and subregional security in Europe and in Asia. We note the significant progress that has been made in a number of areas of Europe and Asia — for example, the positive development of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), and the signing of the historic Shanghai Agreement between

Kazakstan, Kyrgyztan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and the People's Republic of China on military confidence-building measures and border matters. Obviously, much remains to be done in developing and strengthening security and cooperation at the regional level, particularly in Asia.

In this connection, we note that a real contribution in this area could be the convening of a conference on mutual assistance and confidence-building measures in Asia, as proposed by President Nazarbaev in his statement at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. February 1996 marked an important milestone towards this goal, when a meeting was held at the level of deputy heads of the foreign policy departments of more than two dozen Asian States to work on the base documents for such a conference. We are grateful for the support lent by States of Asia and other continents towards holding this conference on mutual assistance and confidence-building measures in Asia.

The results of the consistent efforts of so many States to draft and open for signature the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty create a favourable atmosphere for the work of the First Committee at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. In working to achieve the lofty goals of the United Nations in the area of disarmament and in safeguarding international security, my colleagues in the First Committee can, as before, count on the constructive cooperation of the delegation of Kazakstan.

Mr. Fostervoll (Norway): At the outset, I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to your important Committee posts.

Before addressing some of the issues on our agenda, permit me to make some observations on the relationship between our two most challenging objectives: nuclear arms control and disarmament on the one hand, and efforts to prevent the proliferation of such weapons on the other. In the view of my Government, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation should not be viewed as separate processes. For our non-proliferation efforts to succeed, further concrete progress must be demonstrated towards reducing the political and strategic significance of nuclear weapons. That implies full implementation of existing arms control and disarmament agreements, as well as a political willingness to contemplate further steps. The Norwegian Government has noted with interest the report by the Canberra Commission and considers its proposals and recommendations to be of great value in charting the course ahead.

I would like also to emphasize that by pointing out the interrelationship between arms control and disarmament and non-proliferation, we do not advocate that progress in one area should be made hostage to positive developments in the other. Such an approach would lead to a sterile confrontation. Rather, we should establish a positive linkage. Further progress towards nuclear disarmament will strengthen the perception of the decreasing relevance of nuclear weapons as instruments of national policy, thereby reducing the incentive to acquire such weapons. Or to quote the representative of the United States in his constructive statement yesterday, "The world's nuclear arsenals must keep shrinking" (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, First Committee, 5th meeting, p. 7*).

Secondly, the international disarmament agenda should also encompass what I would call the management of disarmament — that is, the problems relating to the implementation of the nuclear and chemical disarmament processes, including the secure and environmentally safe handling of material from nuclear and chemical weapons scheduled for destruction. These are new issues of great complexity which will become a growing challenge in the years ahead and which call for a more concerted and strengthened international effort. Norway will continue to make an active contribution in this important area.

For the first time since mankind entered the nuclear age, we now have a Treaty banning all nuclear test explosions. The adoption by the General Assembly earlier this fall of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a milestone in the field of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and it represents a major step towards ending the nuclear arms race. By banning all nuclear testing, the Treaty removes a threat to human health and the environment that has been a cause for serious concern for my Government for most of the past half century.

The CTBT will facilitate the further implementation of the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference last year. Norway urges all United Nations Member States that have not already done so to sign the Treaty and to undertake the necessary ratification procedures to make the Treaty enter into force as soon as possible.

Now that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been concluded, it is the view of my Government that all nuclear-weapon States should destroy their nuclear testing facilities, as a logical consequence of

that comprehensive agreement. The French Government has undertaken to close down its testing site on the Mururoa atoll in the Pacific. We welcome that decision. Similar measures should also be implemented by the other nuclear Powers.

Because we see verification and monitoring as indispensable elements in an effective CTBT, Norway has for many years participated actively in the Group of Scientific Experts in Geneva and in the planning and conduct of the Group's Third Technical Test experiment. We will continue our participation in the work towards establishing the effective international verification system needed to ensure a credible Treaty. Norway will continue to provide assistance in order to promote broad geographic participation in the Third Technical Test, thereby laying the foundation for envisaged participation in the International Monitoring System.

In order to facilitate the speedy establishment of the CTBT preparatory commission, and to ensure that the CTBT organization is fully operational immediately after the Treaty has entered into force, Norway is prepared to provide technical expertise as well as financial support.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is of key importance in the nuclear disarmament process. The strengthened NPT review process will play a central role in the preparations leading up to the next review conference, in the year 2000. During this process, the nuclear-weapon States have the opportunity to contribute substantially. We believe that a halt in the qualitative upgrading of nuclear weapons arsenals and further comprehensive reductions will lead to a strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

The agreements between the United States and the Russian Federation on nuclear disarmament and arms control have made it possible to reduce the number of nuclear weapons drastically. It is important to ensure that the strategic disarmament process is continued in a controlled and orderly manner. The reductions in nuclear weapons arsenals prescribed by the START II agreement inspire greater confidence in the willingness of the major nuclear Powers to build down their stockpiles. Norway encourages ongoing preparations for negotiations on strategic reductions beyond those prescribed by START II, and calls for an early start of such negotiations, involving, as appropriate, the other nuclear-weapon States as well.

It is important for the disarmament process to strengthen control of all plutonium and highly-enriched uranium. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will start negotiations on an agreement prohibiting the production of fissile material for weapons purposes as soon as possible in 1997. A cut-off agreement is important to reduce the availability of fissile material which can be used in nuclear explosives, and would thus be a significant measure in our efforts to prevent proliferation.

The stocks of fissile material held by nuclear Powers are currently not subject to international control. The nuclear Powers should work towards enhanced transparency as regards their stocks of weapons-grade fissile material. As a first step, the nuclear Powers should on a voluntary basis provide information on their stocks of plutonium and highly-enriched uranium. A second step could be to agree on certain cooperative measures to clarify and confirm unilateral declarations. A process of increased transparency could take place in parallel with, and facilitate, negotiations on a cut-off agreement.

We also believe that the nuclear Powers should display greater openness about their nuclear weapons arsenals by providing information on their size and composition. This issue is particularly important in the current phase following the indefinite extension of the NPT. Greater openness concerning nuclear weapons arsenals could thus play an important role as a confidence-building measure.

A landmark multilateral disarmament treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, is expected to enter into force during the first half of 1997. The Convention has been signed by 160 States, and 64 States have ratified it so far. This testifies to the broad international support the Convention enjoys. Although we welcome the fact that the Convention is about to enter into force, it is a matter of concern that the only two declared possessors of chemical weapons, the United States and the Russian Federation, have yet to ratify it. We therefore call upon those two States in particular to do so without further delay.

Over the past three years a substantial effort has been made to establish a verification regime to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Such verification measures, including on-site investigations, would undoubtedly improve our ability to protect our peoples from those who would use disease as a weapon of war. These efforts need to be pursued with a view to producing a recommended protocol on verification by 1998

at the latest. We hope the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological and Toxin Weapons later this year will inject the necessary impetus to this end.

Greater transparency in military matters and the systematic nurturing of confidence among States are key elements in bringing about a more stable, prosperous and better-governed world community. Accumulation of conventional armaments can only trigger mutual suspicion. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms performs an important function in increasing international confidence, insofar as Member nations of the United Nations lend their full support. Our future efforts should be directed along two tracks: increased participation by Member States and the extension of the scope of the data submitted with the aim of submitting all relevant data.

The United Nations could also play an important role in relation to practical disarmament measures in regions that have suffered from conflict. Such measures could include the collection and disposal of small arms and light weapons, the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and demining. This would contribute to consolidating peace and security and to preventing the recurrence of conflict.

I would also briefly like to refer to the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. My Government believes that these Centres continue to conduct useful activities, and Norway will continue to support them, as we have done in the past.

Anti-personnel landmines are among the most insidiously destructive weapons widely used in war. They continue to spread terror for years, or even decades, after hostilities have ended. We should all recognize that the military utility of anti-personnel landmines is far outweighed by their cost in human and socio-economic terms. The outcome of the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons earlier this year fell far short of our expectations. The amended Protocol II on mines and booby-traps does not ban anti-personnel mines and does not go as far in the area of interim protection for civilians as we and many others would have wished. This is disappointing, but we welcome the amended Protocol as an important first step on the road to a legally binding global ban, and urge all United Nations Member States to adhere to the Convention.

By 1 October this year all anti-personnel mines in Norwegian military stockpiles had been removed and destroyed. By carrying out this extensive phasing out and destruction programme, Norway has now become a country free from anti-personnel mines. We hope this position will help the ongoing international efforts to ban these weapons. We are encouraged that an increasing number of countries is now advocating a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. In our view, the Ottawa process improves the prospect of achieving a treaty banning all production, transfers, stockpiling and use of anti-personnel landmines. Norway is ready to join Canada and other countries in negotiating such a treaty to be ready for signature in December 1997.

We regret the failure of the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) to provide Protocol II on landmines with an effective verification mechanism. As a complementary transparency- and confidence-building measure to this Protocol, we should invite the Secretary-General to establish an international register of information on stockpiles of all types of anti-personnel landmines as well as on producers of anti-personnel landmines of types whose use is prohibited by the amended Protocol II of the CCW Convention. All United Nations Member States should be encouraged to provide information regarding their stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines and to submit it to the Secretary-General. Moreover, Governments, United Nations personnel and non-governmental organizations involved in authorized mine-clearing projects, should be invited to collect and submit relevant information on producers that manufacture prohibited anti-personnel mines. This information could be an integral part of a policy designed to prevent or deter States from using anti-personnel mines of types prohibited by the amended Protocol II on landmines, by making it more likely that such use will be detected at an early stage.

With regard to other items on the agenda within the purview of the Committee, I would like to refer to the statement made at the 3rd meeting by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union, with which Norway was aligned.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): May I begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. Our warm congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

The end of the cold war created a positive international political climate conducive to arms limitation and disarmament. We should take advantage of this window of opportunity to achieve substantive agreements in this field. This new international political climate necessitates the adoption of new approaches in addressing disarmament

issues and a review of old strategic concepts and doctrines, lingering from the cold-war period.

Undoubtedly, there is a need for the nuclear-weapon States to review and revise their nuclear doctrines and policies. It is our view that, with the cold war and the East-West confrontation behind us, the nuclear-weapon States no longer need to rely on nuclear weapons to defend their vital security interests. In fact, nuclear weapons have never been used since the tragic atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

In the present-day world, nuclear weapons are no longer usable by the nuclear-weapon States. They must, therefore, be eliminated, and their use must be outlawed. In this context, we welcome the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice dated 8 July 1996. In its advisory opinion, the Court ruled that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the international law applicable to armed conflict and, in particular, the principles and rules of humanitarian law. The Court further reaffirmed unanimously the legal position that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to comprehensive nuclear disarmament under strict and effective international control. This historic advisory opinion of the Court de-legitimizes the use of nuclear weapons. Although the advisory opinion of the Court is not legally binding, it will certainly be helpful in the crystallization in due course of customary legal norms on the non-use of nuclear weapons. It also further reinforces our moral and legal arguments and rationale for nuclear disarmament with a view to total elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

In our view, which is shared by an overwhelming majority of the non-aligned countries, the following measures and agreements are essential for the step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat and the achievement of the goal of nuclear disarmament: implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty; a treaty banning fissile materials; an international legal instrument or instruments on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and on other aspects of banning the use of nuclear weapons; and an international treaty or treaties on the step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat and on a phased programme of progressive and balanced deep reduction of nuclear weapons with a view to the total elimination of these weapons within a time-bound framework.

We welcome the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test- Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the General Assembly on 10 September 1996. The Treaty, although the Conference on Disarmament was not able to endorse it, is a significant achievement by the Conference. It is not perfect, but it is the best the Conference on Disarmament can produce, given the prevailing situation. An end to nuclear test explosions by all States in all environments for all time is an essential step in preventing the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear weapons and their further proliferation. This, together with other measures I mentioned earlier, will contribute to nuclear disarmament, leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. I should, however, like to stress here that it is extremely important that the Treaty enter into force expeditiously and attract universal adherence by Member States.

The time is opportune to negotiate and conclude an international legal instrument providing security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. We urge that further efforts be pursued at the preparatory meetings for the NPT review conference and in the Conference on Disarmament in 1997 with a view to producing tangible results on this important issue.

At the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, Myanmar, on behalf of 32 other sponsors and with the support of an overwhelming majority of non-aligned countries, introduced a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament. In fact, the draft resolution was submitted in pursuance of the decision contained in the Final Document of the Eleventh Summit Meeting of Non-Aligned Countries. It was adopted by the General Assembly with the overwhelming support of 106 positive votes.

Resolution 50/70 P is the first General Assembly resolution to call for the commencement of multilateral negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a phased programme of progressive and balanced deep reductions of nuclear weapons leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. The importance of this resolution cannot be overemphasized. Accordingly, it is hoped that the General Assembly will once again approve at this fifty-first session a follow-up resolution to resolution 50/70 P on nuclear disarmament with the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States.

Another question that must be addressed with urgency is that of banning fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We urge the Conference on Disarmament to commence substantive negotiations on this subject at the beginning of its 1997 session.

Conventional arms control also needs to be addressed in our disarmament endeavours. The question of conventional arms control is very complex. There is a big difference in the nature of nuclear weapons and of conventional weapons. This necessitates the adoption of a different approach to conventional arms control. In the case of conventional arms control, we should pinpoint specific problems and address them. It is therefore very important that we first identify precisely an issue before placing it on our agenda of disarmament negotiations. In the view of my delegation, illicit trafficking in conventional arms and their illicit use are the pressing problems that need to be addressed in the field of conventional arms control.

Now turning to activities in our region to promote disarmament, I should like to commend the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for having done an excellent job in organizing regional conferences and seminars on various disarmament issues in the past year. These regional conferences and seminars provide us an opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions on current security and disarmament issues in our region, and to contribute our views on global disarmament questions from our national and regional perspectives. We recommend that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific should continue its useful activities and should even increase these activities wherever possible.

We stand at the threshold of the third millennium. We must do our utmost to resolve the disarmament questions I have outlined with new approaches and a new determination, as required by present-day realities. For my delegation, as well as for the delegations of most other countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, nuclear disarmament is the highest priority on our future disarmament agenda. Our vision is a nuclear-weapon-free world. Let us redouble our efforts for the early realization of this vision.

Mr. Acemah (Uganda): Permit me, first of all, to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, upon your unanimous election to preside over the deliberations of the Committee. We are confident that under your able guidance the First Committee will handle its work with characteristic efficiency. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

The beginning of this decade marked the end of the cold war. Our hopes were raised for a world based on the ideals of dialogue and trust rather than on mutual suspicion and mistrust. It was to be a world geared towards the attainment of peace and security aimed at the twin goals of economic development and social progress for all humankind. Unfortunately, peace and development still elude many countries. The menaces of regional conflicts, oppression and injustice still afflict the majority of humankind. For them the end of the cold war is indeed meaningless. Their plight cries out for action. The United Nations must give hope to these despairing people and stand in the forefront of the struggle for peace — which is not simply the absence of war, hot or cold; but something which we must all actively seek. Peace indeed is about mutual caring for all mankind.

The birth of the nuclear era, marked by the bombing of Hiroshima a few weeks after the signing of the United Nations Charter in June 1945, gave added meaning to the words "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". It also gave this Organization an added role in the field of disarmament. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament concluded that disarmament had become the most urgent task facing the international community. It agreed in its Programme of Action that priorities and measures in the field of disarmament should be undertaken as a matter of urgency in the areas of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, including chemical weapons and conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects. There was also established a comprehensive programme with agreed time-frames for progressive and balanced reduction of stockpiles of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their eventual elimination.

Nearly two decades later and well into the Third Disarmament Decade, international action in this regard has on balance been disappointing. The nuclear-weapon States continue to hold on to their arsenals. The number of nuclear warheads may have been reduced, but with the qualitative improvements made, the destructive capacities have in fact been enhanced. Solemn declarations about their intention to eliminate nuclear weapons have been made. However, in the absence of concrete time-frames, prevarication on this matter has become the norm. The world is looking for results. That is why my delegation wishes today to associate itself fully with the submission made by 28 countries to the Conference on Disarmament on 8 August 1996 on a programme of action for the elimination of nuclear weapons in three phases, with a view to the consolidation of a nuclear-weapon-free world in the year 2020.

Let me briefly touch on the recently concluded Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Uganda

welcomes the Treaty as a first step towards the attainment of the goal of total nuclear disarmament. We regret that the CTBT prohibits only explosive nuclear tests while ignoring other forms of technology aimed at qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. If the Treaty is to be effective, it must be able to stem both vertical and horizontal proliferation. In this regard, my delegation wishes to state that an effective treaty should end all nuclear testing. We therefore consider the present CTBT simply as a first step in the long march towards the total elimination of all nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame. Indeed, we are concerned about the attitude of some nuclear Powers that sub-critical nuclear tests are permissible under the CTBT because there is no nuclear criticality or fission chain reaction. We view this attitude as an indication that some of these Powers are not really committed to the ultimate elimination of all nuclear weapons. We are also disappointed that the Treaty includes no articles on non-use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear States. A "no-first-use" provision would also have been useful and reassuring.

Despite its obvious defects, CTBT should be strictly adhered to, particularly by the declared nuclear Powers. The spirit of disarmament with which it was negotiated must be scrupulously observed by those with a nuclear capacity; otherwise it will become a test-explosion-ban Treaty and will ignite a nuclear-weapon technology race.

Last April, at Cairo, Uganda, together with several other African countries, signed the Treaty of Pelindaba, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. Africa is a unique region in this regard, as it is home to a former nuclear-weapon State: South Africa. Under the Treaty, all nations committed themselves to declaring any capability of manufacturing nuclear explosive devices. By pioneering complete openness, the Government of South Africa acted with great courage and sincerity. We hope that this will serve as an example for other anticipated nuclear-weapon-free zones. We pay tribute to the Republic of South Africa for its leadership in the field of nuclear disarmament.

The end of the cold war and the subsequent end of the super-Power rivalry presented us with a golden opportunity to achieve the long-held desire of the countries of the Indian Ocean region to declare that region a zone of peace. We believe that these changed circumstances demand that the five permanent members of the Security Council participate fully in the process of shaping the final character of the anticipated zone of peace. We are disappointed that these countries have chosen not to take part in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean. The argument that a zone of peace would restrict the freedom of movement of their navies is unfortunate because it prejudges the conclusions of the negotiating process.

We call upon the five permanent members of the Security Council to recognize that there is an overwhelming desire on the part of the States in the region, and the international community in general, to achieve the objectives of resolution 2832 (XXVI) of 16 December 1971 and subsequent resolutions, including resolution 50/76 of 12 December 1995. The Indian Ocean is too important to the global economy and to international peace and security to be utilized on an ad hoc basis. Such a situation is a recipe for future discord.

The menace of terrorism, internal conflicts, organized crime and drug trafficking demands that the international community take action on the spread and transfer of conventional weapons. Such weapons today pose a danger to the economies, sovereignty and well-being of many small States. Indeed, the survival of fledgling democracies in these countries is threatened.

Commercial considerations, which are currently the driving force behind transactions in conventional weapons, must be critically re-examined. A spirit of common responsibility for international, regional and national security must be adopted. The effects of past failed policies in this regard are too evident and chilling to be ignored. The tragedies of Somalia, Liberia and Afghanistan are just a few examples.

Transparency has been proposed as a solution to problems created by conventional weapons. While my delegation agrees with this view, we believe that it is only a partial solution. What is necessary is global action grounded in international cooperation for a comprehensive, non-selective, non-discriminatory, balanced and effective reduction in conventional weapons, particularly in areas of conflict and tension. Self-restraint by major weapon-exporting countries can play a pivotal role in this regard. It is only when the suppliers cease to be willing to supply that positive results will be achieved.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the benefits of the end of the cold war continue to elude most countries. They have neither reaped the benefits of the "peace dividend" nor attained regional peace. The time has come for the international community to come together to seek durable solutions to the underlying causes of conflicts and threats to international peace and security. Total and complete disarmament within a specified time-frame would be a vital contribution to this search for solutions.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me at the outset to convey to you, Sir, the warm congratulations of my delegation on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I also wish to extend congratulations to the other members of the Bureau, and to assure you of the full cooperation of the delegation of Mali. I wish to take this opportunity also to congratulate your predecessor, Ambassador Eredenechuluun of Mongolia, for the remarkable work accomplished during the last session.

The current session of our Committee is taking place under favourable auspices. For several months the international community, with a redeeming burst of energy, has rediscovered the virtues of multilateral dialogue as the best means of resolving the complex and sensitive problems of disarmament and international security.

Considerable progress has been achieved in this area, especially with regard to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear and chemical weapons. After the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Mali welcomed in a spirit of hope the opening for signature in New York on 24 September the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which constitutes an important stage in progress towards complete disarmament.

Mali, which joined in sponsoring the resolution through which the Treaty was adopted, will sign the Treaty in the next few days. In the same spirit, Mali welcomes the conclusion over the years of Treaties on regional denuclearization in Latin America, the South Pacific, Africa and South-East Asia. My country hopes that this dynamic will extend to other areas, especially the Middle East and the rest of the southern hemisphere. My delegation believes that signing such instruments strengthens the denuclearization regime, in this case the NPT and the CTBT, and contributes to freeing our planet from the threat of nuclear destruction.

Despite these significant advances, other disarmament questions remain unresolved, especially with regard to bacteriological and chemical weapons. Mali hopes that the relevant treaties will be rapidly concluded so as to protect humankind from these types of weapons. With regard to anti-personnel landmines, whose devastating effects remain long after conflicts are over, the Government of Mali is absolutely in favour of the conclusion of a treaty for an end to the production and for the total elimination of this type of weapon.

Mali's commitment to general and complete disarmament is an act of faith that will be achieved through national as well as international initiatives. In 1994 the President of the Republic of Mali, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, requested and obtained special assistance from the Secretary-General to establish an advisory mission to study ways and means to curb the proliferation of small arms in the Sahel-Saharan subregion. Mali's initiative was supported by other countries of the region, in addition to those of other regions, during the forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions of the General Assembly through the adoption of resolutions 49/75 G and 50/70 H.

This affords us an opportunity to thank all the countries that, with Mali, are sponsoring the draft resolution on assistance to States in curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and in collecting them. I should also like to appeal to all other countries to support that draft resolution.

As members know, Mali's initiative has contributed to creating within the Organization the now-celebrated concept of micro-disarmament, a concept designed to draw the international community's attention to the disastrous consequences of small arms, especially in developing countries, where they greatly contribute to fuelling conflicts.

Now, we must take action. In so doing, the international community must lend wholehearted support to the efforts being made by the countries of the Sahel-Saharan subregion to curb the proliferation of small arms, particularly through effective border control and a reappraisal of the legal instruments relating to the bearing of arms.

We must effectively control the flow of weapons in our subregion, which entails considering the creation of a subregional register of conventional arms and a data bank. My country, Mali, is working on this and hopes that it may be progressively extended to include al the States of the Sahel-Saharan subregion.

Along the same lines, on 27 March 1996 my Government organized at Timbuktu a symbolic ceremonial destruction of stockpiles of several thousand weapons turned over by ex-combatants belonging to armed movements in the north of Mali. The ceremony, which was known as "Flame of Peace," was led by Mali's Head of State, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konare, and was attended by the President of the Republic of Ghana, the current Chairman of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and ministerial delegations from several of Mali's neighbours. The United Nations, which had contributed to

the peace efforts and to the collection of small arms through its Department of Political Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme, sent a large delegation.

At the dawn of the third millennium the essential question remains the identification of measures that can ensure stability and security for all, without nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction. In that context, Mali supports the principle of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, for which we have high hopes.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): Mr. Chairman, allow me at the outset to extend my warm congratulations to you and to the other officers of the First Committee on your election to guide this important Committee. We are convinced that under your leadership our work will be crowned with success.

This session of the First Committee is taking place in an international context that is marked by important developments in the field of disarmament, among them the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and its opening for signature. So far, 126 countries, including Tunisia, have signed that Treaty. This represents a widespread impetus that is in keeping with the importance of this new instrument, for which non-nuclear, and particularly non-aligned, countries have waited so long and with such hope. Notwithstanding some reservations, it is also in keeping with the international community's profound awareness of the need to foster the cause of nuclear disarmament. However, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will achieve full significance only if it benefits from the determined resolve of all, and in particular of the nuclear States, to achieve a complete cessation of the arms race in all its aspects, nuclear disarmament and the ultimate complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The attainment of that goal, which now more than ever seems within the reach of the international community, calls for implementing the other commitments entered into by the nuclear Powers at the 1995 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as set forth in the Conference's decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Among those commitments, pride of place is given to the early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile material for military purposes and the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally. In this connection, we must accelerate the process to achieve effective implementation of the START II Treaty and early completion of new agreements on further reductions of the strategic weapons arsenals of the two major nuclear Powers.

The creation of denuclearized zones should continue to be encouraged as a consolidating factor in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and as a significant contribution to the strengthening of peace and security at the regional and international levels.

In this connection, Tunisia is proud to note the conclusion last April of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which establishes Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone; we have acceded to that Treaty. We call upon the nuclear Powers to respect the status of that zone and to adhere to the relevant protocols of the Treaty that established it. The conclusion of the Treaty of Pelindaba denotes the firm will of the African States to rid the continent of the spectre of nuclear weapons, and their steadfast commitment to contribute to achieving the goals of world-wide nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The denuclearized zone in Africa and that created in South-East Asia in December 1995 by the Bangkok Treaty join the denuclearized zones already created in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the South Pacific to consolidate a welcome evolution towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons from the whole of the southern hemisphere.

Yet, in the Middle East, a sphere of tension, the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone has not yet been achieved, notwithstanding the repeated appeals not only of the States of the region but of the whole of the international community, as reflected in the many consensus resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. With the accession of the United Arab Emirates and Djibouti to the NPT and the announced accession of the Sultanate of Oman, which we welcome with great satisfaction, Israel is the only country in the region not to have acceded to the NPT and the only one with an uncontrolled nuclear capability, posing a constant and direct threat to security in the Middle East and an obstacle to the establishment of a denuclearized zone in that region. We repeat our appeal to Israel to accede to the NPT and to place its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Still with reference to weapons of mass destruction, it is important that the 1993 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction should enter into force. Tunisia, which was among the first to sign the Convention, has maintained its full commitment to it and is about to complete the process preparatory to its ratification. We welcome with satisfaction the fact that more than 60 countries have ratified the Convention, thus bringing it close to its entry into force. Nevertheless, we believe that the accession of the two major producers of chemical weapons, the United States and the Russian Federation, is of particular importance for the Convention's success.

In another area, efforts to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction must also continue so as to give that instrument an appropriate verification mechanism.

Problems in the area of conventional weapons are among the most pressing. First and foremost, the international community is involved with the problem of landmines, those fearsome devices which cost little to produce but cause indiscriminate destruction among the civilian population. Multifaceted action is therefore necessary at all levels, including on the part of the United Nations, to put an end to that scourge.

Significant progress was accomplished last year with the agreement reached last May at Geneva by the States parties to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects on a number of amendments to Protocol II to that Convention. By virtue of those amendments, the scope of the Protocol is extended to armed conflicts which are not of an international nature; the use of anti-personnel mines which do not self-destruct or self-deactivate is also banned permanently.

Despite their restrictions on the transfer and use of mines, these improvements to the 1980 Convention are still not the best solution to the problem of mines. In our view, that requires a total ban on anti-personnel landmines, towards which the international community must work in the future. Tunisia will join First Committee efforts to consolidate the principle of a total and permanent ban on anti-personnel landmines.

The question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament is of the highest importance for my country. It is our view that the countries that wish to join as full members that unique forum for the negotiation of multilateral treaties in the area of disarmament should be able to do so. It is in that spirit that Tunisia welcomes the decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament last June on the admission of 23 new members to the Conference. Inspired by that same concern, my country is participating in an initiative taken by a group of States to submit a new draft resolution calling on the Conference on Disarmament to consider at its 1997 session the other candidacies it has received, including that of Tunisia.

The end of the cold war has taught us that, among other things, that security was not only the military dimension of the absence of armed conflict and disarmament. No matter how important that dimension is, and it is very important indeed, it is not enough to bring about viable, lasting peace and security. This is shown by the persistence on the ashes of bipolar confrontation of many hotbeds of tension which fuel the new or revived phenomena of narrow nationalism, xenophobia, tribalism, extremism and terrorism, which most often occur in a context of the acute social and economic difficulties facing many countries and peoples in the southern hemisphere. This means that the world is calling today for a new concept of security, an interactive global security that comprehends all aspects of human security — including the military ones, of course, but also economic, social, cultural, human and environmental aspects.

It is this dynamic concept of security which my country supports and which is the foundation of its policy regarding relations with all of its partners, especially in the Mediterranean. In the Mediterranean, Tunisia takes an active part in the process leading to the building and consolidation of a multifaceted partnership between the north and south shores of the Mediterranean, with political dialogue, cooperation in all areas, a common struggle against the challenges to the countries of the region, and a commitment to the universal values of tolerance, democracy and respect for human rights.

There can be no true security unless peoples have confidence in their future and in the future of their children, unless there is justice and human solidarity which allows all to live in peace and harmony: because the purpose of all action is men and women and their happiness. For all of this, strengthening international cooperation for the economic and social development of the countries of the

South and the reduction of the disparities between the North and the South are more urgent than ever.

Today, thanks to reductions in military arsenals and to the economies which this has allowed in military budgets, disarmament is able to contribute significantly to augmenting the resources needed to promote the economies of the countries of the South and to create a more balanced and harmonious world.

Ms. Darmanin (Malta): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my delegation, allow me to congratulate you on your election. Your abilities will certainly guide our work to a successful outcome. Malta associates itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of Ireland on behalf of the European Union.

The pursuit of international security and disarmament remains at the core of the existence of this Organization. Recent steps taken by the international community to overcome and contain threats to peace have witnessed confidence replace mistrust and peaceful coexistence supplant tension and suspicion.

This year was marked by another step forward in the disarmament process: the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Following the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the adoption of the CTBT reflects the continued commitment of States to achieve the noble objective of disarmament. This is a significant step in a process which furthers the momentum achieved over past years and provides an impetus for future agreements.

The adoption of the Treaty of Pelindaba and the ratification of the Treaty of Rarotonga by France, the United Kingdom and the United States, together with ongoing efforts in South-East Asia are an encouraging signal of the commitment of States to the consolidation of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We hope that similar achievement may one day be the blessing of the Middle East.

The disarmament agenda remains: the need for broader confidence to ensure the universal adherence and compliance to adopted treaties. In the wake of significant steps in nuclear disarmament, the reduction of bipolar tensions and the explosion of regional conflicts following the end of the cold war, the priorities have mushroomed. Remote as it may be, the risk of world conflict is still present, as is the risk of the overspill of local wars.

The total horror of a nuclear holocaust induces in-built restraint. This, however, is not the case with conventional armaments or weapons of mass destruction, which inflict suffering on millions in conflicts world wide. Many States are perhaps more vulnerable to the threat of such arms, be they conventional, chemical or biological. The indiscriminate and cruel effects of the use of such armaments shock us into action. The images of victims, be they women, children, maimed, refugees or displaced persons, require of us concerted action to curb the inhumane use of such weapons.

Malta looks forward to the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, the completion of a verification protocol to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the entry into force of the additional Protocols to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects. A cut-off treaty on fissile material remains one of the next priorities of the international community.

The call for a ban on the production, export and use of anti-personnel landmines has Malta's full support. Initiatives taken to achieve a global ban on anti-personnel landmines are a commensurate response to the global suffering which has been wrought by such mines and deserve the full support of the international community. The assistance of Member States in demining, such as that provided by the European Union, is commendable and worthy of support.

Only a consolidated regime of confidence-building and disarmament measures can buttress the belief in and commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes. Such a process of confidence-building requires concerted regional and international action. At the international level, initiatives such as the standardized reporting of military expenditure, objective information on military matters and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms are all measures which build confidence through transparency and trust. The enhancement of such mechanisms buttresses our collective efforts to build security and peace.

At the regional level, increased cooperation can play a crucial role in the consolidation of stability. Malta's proposal that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) declare itself a regional arrangement, in the terms of Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter,

was inspired by the benefits of enhanced mutual assistance and cooperation between international and regional organizations. Addressing the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malta, Mr. Guido de Marco stated,

> "It is still too early to assess the impact and full potential of that development, particularly in view of the complex situations which already existed and continued to develop in the CSCE region. However, the future ability and effectiveness of the United Nations in containing, addressing and resolving situations of conflict is dependent on the creation and consolidation of such regional arrangements". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 10th meeting, p. 21)*

Comprehensive regional security is distinct from notions of defence. It encompasses a wide-ranging cooperation policy at different levels in a number of fields. It seeks to melt the bastions of suspicion and consolidate a regime of confidence-building measures which ultimately yield peace and stability.

Malta has been active in the promotion of security and cooperation at the regional level. At the crossroads of cultures and history, the Mediterranean is wrought by tension and vulnerable to conflict. Malta has always stated its belief that the security of Europe and security in the Mediterranean are mutually dependent. Conscious of this dependence and the need for interlocking and reciprocally reinforcing institutions and mechanisms, Malta has promoted a broad-ranging cooperative policy for the Mediterranean.

The essence of initiatives such as those for a council of the Mediterranean and the stability pact for the Mediterranean is recognition of the need for a multifaceted and broad-ranging approach to address destabilizing threats. At the Euro-Med Information and Training Seminar held in Malta, the Deputy Prime Minister of my country said,

> "The pursuit of peace in the Mediterranean should be translated into a concrete exercise of preventive diplomacy".

The proposed stability pact for the Mediterranean is based on the notion that flexible structures and mechanisms facilitate the defusing of regional tensions as they emerge. The continued interest in this proposal augurs well for its future development.

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership launched in Barcelona last year is another example of common efforts to address root causes of tension and conflict. The wide-ranging contacts established through mutual cooperation in the political, security, economic and financial fields, as well as those of social, cultural and human relations, serve as a basis to build understanding and trust while respecting and enhancing the diversity characteristic of the region. The widening and deepening of contacts through this forum will certainly contribute to the overall stability of the region and well-being of its people.

Many points have been raised during this general debate, providing us with an opportunity to reflect on the number of priorities which remain. Agreements reached in recent years require our continued attention and vigilance. Adherence and universality of agreements is the guarantee by which States are assured their security, regions their stability and the international community its peace.

Our efforts must remain constant and sustained to strengthen what has been achieved and to conquer new ground in the interest of international peace and security.

Mr. Edwards (Marshall Islands): We offer you our sincere congratulations, Mr. Chairman, on your well-deserved election, and we look forward to working with you during this session. We also extend warm congratulations to the other members of the Bureau, who are all well known to us as skilled and competent representatives.

As the Committee is no doubt aware, the Republic of the Marshall Islands is currently the Chairman of the South Pacific Forum. The member States of the Forum that are also members of the United Nations have submitted some views to the Secretary-General in the form of the South Pacific Forum communiqué. I wish to take this opportunity to expand on some of its points as a contribution to this debate from the national delegation of the Marshall Islands. The other members of the Forum have made and will make their own remarks in their national capacities.

The Forum expressed satisfaction at the permanent cessation of French nuclear testing in the South Pacific. This marked the end of all nuclear testing in a region which had been subjected to both atmospheric and underground testing for five decades. China's recent announcement of a moratorium on nuclear testing means that all five nuclear-weapon States are now observing testing moratoriums, which has been long urged by the Forum. Earlier this month the General Assembly took action to adopt and open for signature the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

(CTBT). This effort was fully supported by the Forum, and the resolution was co-sponsored by all the United Nations Members that are members of the Forum. We are pleased with the adoption of resolution 50/245, and urge all States to join with us in signing and ratifying the CTBT as soon as possible to facilitate the Treaty's early implementation. We are particularly grateful to the Government of Fiji for being the first country to ratify the Treaty, and we commend it for its initiative. We look forward to the first meeting of the preparatory committee for the CTBT.

The leaders of my region also warmly welcome the signature and ratification by Vanuatu of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, the signature of Tonga and the signing of the Protocols to the Treaty by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. As a result of these developments, all States within the Treaty area have now given their support to the Treaty, and all five nuclear-weapon States have undertaken to respect its provisions. We welcome the ratification by France of the Protocols, and the Forum also urges early ratification of the Protocols by the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

My delegation would like to note that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has now concluded the collection of samples from the nuclear-weapon test sites in French Polynesia. The expedition was conducted by 11 distinguished scientists, and we are encouraged by the fact that they appear to have been given fairly good access to the test sites. My delegation would, however, be more comfortable with this scientific process if a preliminary report could be made available to concerned delegations. Since the final results will not be available until late next year, we would like to have an indication of what we will be facing in the future. In this regard we take note of the statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Planning and Environment of Seychelles. She reflected on the historical relationships between small island developing States and the colonial Powers, and how the small island developing States have been made to serve the interests of the colonial regime. The Minister reflected that upon independence, these islands have often been left to their own means to deal with the problems which were left behind. We have some knowledge of what this means in real terms, not just in theory, and we are hopeful that the same situation will not arise in French Polynesia once self-determination is granted to its people.

The Forum leaders were encouraged by the establishment since their last meeting of two nuclear-weapon-free zones, in South- East Asia and Africa. Leaders noted with satisfaction that these developments represented progress with respect to the decisions accompanying the indefinite extension in 1995 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this context, Forum leaders expressed support for an appropriate resolution at this session of the United Nations General Assembly whereby signatory States of the southern hemisphere nuclear-weapon-free- zone treaties and other members of the international community could affirm their support for these zones and cooperate in the furtherance of the goals of the zones and of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. I am pleased to be able to inform this Committee that this process is now well under way and that the Marshall Islands will be co-sponsoring the relevant resolution.

The Forum again reaffirmed the existence of a special responsibility towards those peoples of the former United Nations Trust Territory administered by the United States, the Marshall Islands, that had been adversely affected as a result of nuclear- weapon tests conducted during the period of the Trusteeship. This responsibility included safe resettlement of displaced human populations and the restoration of affected areas to economic productivity. This is a matter of extreme importance to the Marshall Islands, and we feel strongly that urgent progress needs to be made. We are grateful that some steps have been taken by the former administering Power, but we need to fully address all issues between us. The international community has an acknowledged role to play, and we would welcome further assistance and interest.

We should recall the Advisory Opinion rendered by the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, which recognized that all members of the international community have an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. The Forum leaders urged all States concerned, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to continue meaningful negotiations with a view to further significant reductions of nuclear stockpiles at an early date as a step towards the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Forum wishes again to raise concerns over shipments of plutonium and radioactive wastes through our region. These shipments must be carried out in accordance with the strictest international safety and security standards. All contingencies must be fully addressed, and full consultation must be carried out with the countries of the regions through which the shipments will occur. In this regard, I wish to note the statements made by a number of

our good friends from the Caribbean region in plenary meeting — the Bahamas, Grenada and Dominica. I wish to reiterate firmly our solidarity with the apprehension expressed by Barbados at having such shipments go through that region.

We also wish to express our strong support for the work being carried out by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. In our view, this is one of the more subtle ways in which the United Nations can be utilized as an efficient vehicle for the promotion of peace and understanding between peoples. The Centre should be supported in these efforts, as it does a commendable job in a very cost-effective manner.

At the regional level, we have been taking steps to limit the threats to our common security from criminal activities. We have recognized that effective regional cooperation in the field of law enforcement will help us combat these threats. In this regard, the Forum Regional Security Committee will meet to examine ways to take forward the implementation of the Honiara Declaration of Law Enforcement Cooperation. The Regional Security Committee has also been asked to study and report on the potential seriousness of any increased movement of weapons throughout the region. The countries of the Pacific intend to work together on this matter and strongly urge international support for our efforts. We will report to the United Nations, in particular to this Committee, on these experiences and progress made when the opportunity arises.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a prime example of how the United Nations can assist the international community with confidence-building measures. It is our firm belief that this Register will go a long way towards allaying the fears of neighbours that have tense relations within their regions. The Marshall Islands thinks that for the successful operation of this Register, all States must comply with the reporting, and we hope to see universal application of the Register in the near future. We feel that by our own report of no new purchases or sales of arms, we are contributing to creating the openness which we all seek in our international relations. Furthermore, I am sure that most members are aware that the Marshall Islands is one of the few countries in the world that has no armed forces other than our national police and fisheries patrols. We are doing our best to cooperate in the promotion of global security and mutual cooperation for all States and hope to see an equally supportive attitude from our colleagues in this Committee.

In conclusion, we look forward to a fruitful discussion in this Committee of all issues related to disarmament and international security, and we pledge our cooperation.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): This year, we have witnessed one of the most remarkable achievements in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament. The successful conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) represents the culmination of the long-standing and determined aspirations of the international community to end nuclear-test explosions once and for all. As a staunch supporter of the CTBT, my delegation firmly believes that it represents a critical step towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and that towards fulfilment of the obligations set forth in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

However, as many delegations have pointed out, the CTBT is not an end in itself. Only when all States make a committed effort to pursue further measures for nuclear disarmament can we take meaningful steps towards the eventual world-wide abolition of nuclear weapons and realize our ultimate goal of a totally denuclearized world.

In recognition of the vital significance of the CTBT, the Government of the Republic of Korea endorsed it as an original signatory to the Treaty. We urge all countries that have not signed the Treaty to do so at the earliest possible date. Furthermore, to secure the CTBT's early entry into force and its effective implementation, all signatory States, particularly the 44 States required for the Treaty's enforcement, are requested to make every effort to expedite their domestic ratification process.

Another critical instrument in the field of disarmament that should be pursued with urgency and priority is a cut-off treaty banning the production of fissile material for weapons purposes. My delegation calls for the immediate commencement of negotiations on a cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. Coupled with the CTBT, a cut-off treaty will undoubtedly increase momentum towards nuclear disarmament.

That being said, my delegation wishes to emphasize that the nuclear-weapon States, which are required to assume greater responsibility for the fulfilment of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, should take more systematic and progressive steps towards the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth by further reducing their nuclear-weapon arsenals. In this regard, my delegation notes that the International Court of Justice, in its recent advisory opinion

concerning the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons, concluded unanimously that the nuclear Powers are under an obligation:

> "to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control". *(A/51/4, para. 182)*

Despite significant progress in international efforts towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world, the Korean peninsula is still living under the shadow of nuclear proliferation. While we recognize that there has been some headway in the implementation of the Framework Agreement between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), North Korea has yet to fulfil its multilateral obligations under the NPT. We remain gravely concerned that the DPRK's persistent non-compliance with its safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) poses a dangerous challenge to the integrity and credibility of the global non-proliferation regime and the IAEA safeguards system. Therefore, my delegation again urges the DPRK to come promptly into full compliance with its safeguards obligations under the NPT. Pending such full compliance, North Korea should take all steps deemed necessary by the IAEA to preserve intact all information relevant to verifying the accuracy and completeness of North Korea's initial report.

We also urge the DPRK to live up to its non-proliferation commitments under the Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which it freely agreed to implement by bringing it into force from February 1992.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to invite, albeit somewhat belatedly, 23 countries, including the Republic of Korea, to join the Conference as new members in June of this year. My country, as a new member of the Conference, stands ready to play its due role in strengthening multilateral efforts to achieve substantial disarmament in all areas, thus fostering international peace and security.

My delegation also believes that if the Conference on Disarmament is to garner universal support for its work and to broaden its representation, it should open its doors to all countries that have both the will and the capacity to contribute to the fulfilment of its mandate as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, a uniquely global, comprehensive and verifiable multilateral treaty that provides for the elimination of a whole category of weapons, is on the verge of gaining entry into force, with only one signatory State remaining to deposit its instrument of ratification for the threshold number to be reached. At this critical juncture, however, many countries have voiced their concern that the two major possessor countries have yet to ratify the Convention, which has resulted in delays that may have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the Convention. As a major disarmament agreement, the Chemical Weapons Convention should have all possessor countries — declared and undeclared alike — on board if it is to achieve its stated objectives. Regrettably, however, some countries still refuse to join the international community's initiative to eliminate these horrendous weapons, casting doubt on the effectiveness of the Convention as a disarmament treaty. My Government, therefore, is of the view that all signatory States should increase international pressure on those countries that have failed to join the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so as soon as possible so that the Convention can be launched as a truly universal disarmament regime.

Allow me to make some brief remarks on the ad hoc group meetings of States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, which have been held at Geneva since 1995. At the special meeting in September 1994, ambitious goals were articulated for the adoption of an implementation and verification regime to strengthen the Convention at the Fourth Review Conference, to be held next month. In this regard, I am pleased to note that deliberations in the ad hoc group have enabled member States to identify the specific concerns and interests of each participating State. While this marks a fundamentally important starting point, the lack of significant progress indicates that much work remains for the ad hoc group to achieve its stated objective. My delegation hopes that intensified efforts for and active participation in next year's meetings by Member States will produce a legally binding instrument to strengthen the Convention as soon as possible.

Threats to international peace and security have been posed not only by weapons of mass destruction but also by the excessive build-up of conventional weapons beyond a level considered legitimate for the purpose of self-defence. In this regard, my delegation notes with satisfaction that in May of this year the Disarmament Commission successfully

its preparation of Guidelines for international arms transfers. We are convinced that those Guidelines, which are the first code of conduct in this field, will pave the way to enhancing transparency in international arms transfers and to eradicating illicit arms transfers.

My delegation takes this opportunity to reiterate the importance of the submission of annual reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, a process which contributes to the enhancement of transparency in armaments. Since universal participation in the Register is critical to its success, my delegation urges all States to participate in the Register as soon as possible.

My Government shares the growing concern of the international community over the scourge of anti-personnel landmines. More than 100 million anti-personnel landmines scattered throughout the world not only inflict great suffering and casualties, principally among innocent civilians, but also pose a tremendous obstacle to economic and social development and the reconstruction of the affected region.

My Government has participated in the international effort to minimize and contain the tragic humanitarian consequences of anti-personnel landmines. In this context, my Government announced a one-year export moratorium on anti-personnel landmines in September of last year and has decided to extend it for another year. Furthermore, we are now positively considering accession to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects, including the amended Protocol II, because of its humanitarian merits.

While we recognize the necessity of an international agreement to ban all anti-personnel landmines, the unique security situation on the Korean peninsula has created exceptional circumstances. In this regard, my delegation is of the view that the exceptional situation should be fully addressed until alternatives become available or the risk of aggression has been completely removed.

I should now like to turn to efforts made to achieve disarmament at the regional level. Any regional approach to arms control and disarmament has to consider the conditions and characteristics peculiar to the region. What tends to be neglected, however, is that regional efforts can strengthen the implementation of global arms-control and disarmament regimes.

In this context, it is noteworthy that the statement by the Chairman of the third Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) encouraged Forum countries to work together within the United Nations to promote greater global participation in the United Nations Register and to give active support to internationally recognized legal agreements for global arms control and disarmament, specifically the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Bacteriological Weapons Convention, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the CTBT.

The ASEAN Regional Forum, the only region-wide multilateral security dialogue arrangement at the governmental level in the Asia-Pacific region, is contributing to the enhancement of transparency and mutual confidence in the region as a whole, which is essential to regional and global arm control and disarmament.

In this regard, I would remind delegations that in 1994 the Republic of Korea proposed the launching of a North-East Asia security dialogue, which was aimed at reducing tension and improving the security environment in North-East Asia through confidence-building measures among the six countries concerned. Although the North-East Asia security dialogue has not yet been launched, a track-II meeting — the North-East Asia Cooperation Dialogue — was initiated in 1993. Senior diplomats, defence officials and academics from the Republic of Korea, the United States, Japan, China and Russia have been attending its annual meetings to discuss common security concerns in the region. The countries concerned must make concerted efforts to encourage the DPRK's participation in the Track II meetings and, eventually, develop it into a government-level meeting, namely a North-East Asia security dialogue.

We are of the view that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, at Kathmandu, has proven to be a highly instrumental venue for strengthening regional disarmament efforts. As an active participant in the Kathmandu process and one of the donors of the Centre, my Government strongly hopes that the Centre will contribute to promoting a regional security dialogue through its continued activities.

The new environment in international relations provides us with the potential to make momentous strides in the area of disarmament and international security. In order to prepare ourselves optimally to rise to the challenges and take advantage of the new opportunities, we must have a fresh perspective and formulate innovative concepts and approaches in the face of new emerging issues.

Disarmament is a particularly crucial area that demands new insight from the international community and vigorous approaches to dealing with both old and new issues, such as landmines and micro-disarmament.

With the historic progress that has been made this year with the conclusion of the CTBT, following last year's indefinite extension of the NPT, the momentum towards non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is gaining strength. While we have surmounted perhaps one of the most daunting challenges facing us on the path to nuclear disarmament, the magnitude and importance of the tasks before us at this year's session of the First Committee compel us to build further on our success and move even more decisively to a new plateau in our enduring quest for general and complete disarmament under effective international control. I am confident that with positive thinking and a cooperative spirit, the First Committee can overcome these challenges, old and new, for the benefit of the peace and security of all mankind.

Before concluding, my delegation also wishes to join previous delegations in expressing to you, Mr. Chairman, its warm congratulations on your assumption of the leadership of this prestigious Committee.

Mr. Slade (Samoa): Mr. Chairman, my delegation would like to extend to you and to the other officers of the Committee our congratulations and the assurance of our support.

As of today, 126 countries, including all five declared nuclear-weapon States, have signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), a Treaty we all know was brought directly to the General Assembly at the initiative of Australia. One State, Fiji — and we are proud to acknowledge the act of yet another South Pacific State — has ratified the Treaty. Such progress is remarkable, given the fact that the CTBT was adopted barely a month ago. It affords my delegation the greatest satisfaction.

That there is considerable political consensus in favour of permanently ending nuclear-weapons testing was very clear from the overwhelming vote in the General Assembly in favour of the CTBT. By the demonstrated resolve to subscribe to the Treaty, Member States are expressing both commitment and determination to move further and aim for tangible results in the disarmament process.

From the perspective of my country, this is a most welcome — indeed, a promising — situation. For over four decades we have all sought, and more insistently in recent years, to stop and to prohibit nuclear testing. The adoption of the CTBT therefore marks a very significant achievement for concerted action by the international community, and for us in the Pacific, who have for so long experienced the nightmare of nuclear testing, the Treaty bears the promise of a future of hope.

There is reason to be hopeful, because we see in the CTBT concrete commitments by the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States alike to achieving the ultimate goal of the total elimination of these weapons. The comprehensive verification arrangements laid down in the Treaty will greatly increase the level of international cooperation in the nuclear field. Moreover, the Treaty is a central element of the decision we took last year to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in particular Decision 2 on the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It will be critical to the success of the strengthened review process of the NPT to keep this in mind when we move to take up the review next year.

The CTBT is, of course, one of a range of measures that we must all undertake. Its imperfections are acknowledged. But the CTBT is a step of critical importance and critical potential. The solid vote of approval in the General Assembly, now endorsed by the signatures and the ratification to which I have referred, sends out a powerful political message.

There is very wide support, from Governments and citizens alike, for the position that nuclear testing should never again to be conducted anywhere in the world. Samoa joins the call to all States for the most serious consideration to be given to bringing the Treaty into force. Meanwhile, we, as Treaty signatories, expect all States to be under the obligation, whether or not the Treaty is in force, to stand by the purpose, as well as the spirit of the Treaty and not to act in a manner likely to undermine the Treaty. We would like to think that all Treaty signatories will act in good faith in full support of the CTBT.

Samoa believes that the nuclear-weapon States have a primary responsibility for the fulfilment of the CTBT and its twin objectives of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We continue to look to these States to pursue further negotiations, among themselves and in international forums, to deepen their commitments by further reducing their nuclear-weapon arsenals and their reliance on them for security.

The CTBT is only one line of pursuit. There is much more that calls for our joint effort and attention in our quest for a nuclear-free world. My own country places considerable faith in the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones and the vital role they play in the disarmament process. We note with satisfaction the almost complete regional adherence to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the establishment of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones in South-East Asia and Africa, with the signing, respectively, of the Bangkok and Pelindaba Treaties.

There has also been progress in our region, with the recent accession of two regional parties to the Treaty of Rarotonga, and the signature by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of the Protocols to the Treaty, which established the Nuclear Free Zone in the South Pacific. All five nuclear Powers are now parties to the Treaty of Rarotonga.

As other speakers in the Committee have said, the signing of the Bangkok and Pelindaba Treaties, when taken together with the treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga and the Antarctic Treaty, means that the entire southern hemisphere is now free from the development, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer or use of nuclear weapons. That is why my country fully supports the initiative taken by Brazil aimed at developing links and enhancing cooperation among southern hemisphere nuclear-weapon-free zones. We know from the experience of a meeting last year in New York of the States Parties to the Treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga how important such links are and we believe that more formal and useful mechanisms of cooperation could be developed among all Treaty areas.

Today, the international community is united, perhaps more than at any other time, in recognizing as a fundamental goal the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. Samoa is deeply committed to this goal, and we, together with Members of the United Nations and members of civil society, will continue to work for its achievement.

In this respect, my Government is greatly encouraged by the Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the question of the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons. The Court ruled that there could be no doubt that humanitarian law and principles apply to nuclear weapons. These are principles reflected in the Hague and Geneva Conventions and constitute what the Court terms

> "intransgressible principles of international customary law". (*International Court of Justice General List No. 95, para. 79*)

Of particular importance is the recognition by the Court of the continuing existence and applicability of the Martens Clause, which affirms that the principles and rules of humanitarian law apply to nuclear weapons.

We also draw attention to the Court's acceptance and appreciation of the full recognition of article VI of the NPT and the obligation to negotiate in good faith on nuclear disarmament. As the Court has put it, the obligation is not merely one of conduct but is designed

> "to achieve a precise result — nuclear disarmament in all its aspects — by adopting a particular course of conduct, namely, the pursuit of negotiations on the matter in good faith". (*ibid., para. 99*)

This objective is described by the Court as being

> "of vital importance to the whole of the international community today". (*ibid., para. 103*)

We agree most respectfully.

These findings and conclusions of the Court are of the highest significance and persuasiveness. They provide a new and, in our view, correct perspective on the commitment to disarmament.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Hungary to make a statement in his capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention.

Mr. Tóth (Hungary) Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention: At the outset, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the important office of Chairman of this Committee.

The 1994 Special Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Group open to all States Parties to consider appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, and draft proposals to strengthen the Convention. In September 1996, the Ad Hoc Group held its fifth session and, in the light of the forthcoming Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention, it decided to inform the Review Conference of the progress it has made in fulfilling its mandate. In my capacity as

Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group, I should like to highlight some of the main points of the report.

In the course of the four substantive sessions held since its establishment, the Ad Hoc Group has been considering appropriate measures, including possible verification measures, to strengthen the Convention, to be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument to be submitted for the consideration of the States Parties. In this context, the Ad Hoc Group has, *inter alia*, been considering definitions of terms and objective criteria, such as lists of bacteriological agents and toxins and their threshold quantities, as well as equipment and types of activities, where relevant for specific measures designed to strengthen the Convention; and the incorporation into the regime, as appropriate, of existing and further enhanced confidence-building and transparency measures.

The Ad Hoc Group also considered a system of measures to promote compliance with the Convention, including, as appropriate, measures identified, examined and evaluated in the report of the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts to Identify and Examine Possible Verification Measures from a Scientific and Technical Standpoint (VEREX). Such measures should apply to all relevant facilities and activities, be reliable, cost effective, non-discriminatory and as non-intrusive as possible and consistent with the effective implementation of the system, and should not lead to abuse. It has also been considering specific measures designed to ensure the effective and full implementation of article X that also avoid any restrictions incompatible with the obligations undertaken under the Convention, noting that the provisions of the Convention should not be used to impose restrictions and/or limitations on the transfer, for purposes consistent with the objectives and the provisions of the Convention, of scientific knowledge, technology, equipment and materials.

Based upon the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group, measures should be formulated and implemented in a manner designed to protect sensitive commercial proprietary information and legitimate national security needs and to avoid any negative impact on scientific research, international cooperation and industrial development. In accordance with the mandate, the regime would include, *inter alia*, potential verification measures, as well as agreed procedures and mechanisms for their efficient implementation and measures for the investigation of alleged use.

Where relevant, consideration of those issues by the Ad Hoc Group has sought to build on the considerable body of technical work connected with strengthening the regime of the Biological Weapons Convention undertaken in 1992 and 1993 by the Ad Hoc Group of Technical Experts.

The Ad Hoc Group has made significant progress towards fulfilling the mandate given by the 1994 Special Conference, *inter alia*, by identifying a preliminary framework and elaborating potential basic elements of a legally binding instrument to strengthen the Convention. The results of the discussions are reflected by the Friends of the Chair in papers annexed to the report of the Ad Hoc Group. Those papers are without prejudice to the positions of delegations on the issues under consideration in the Ad Hoc Group and do not imply agreement on the scope or content of the papers.

Summaries on compliance measures reflect the range of discussion that has occurred in the Ad Hoc Group, covering declarations and investigations to address a non-compliance concern, including facility and field investigations, as well as other visits. Naturally, all elements of the summaries require further consideration.

On the question of the definition of terms and objective criteria, a number of terms have been identified as requiring definition. Possible criteria and lists for human, animal and plant pathogens were discussed. The Group held preliminary discussions on a list of key equipment and on the potential role of threshold quantities for specific measures designed to strengthen the Convention.

In the area of confidence-building and transparency measures, surveillance of publications and legislation, data on transfers and transfer requests and on production, multilateral information sharing, exchange visits and confidence-building visits have been discussed as potential voluntary and non-mandatory measures that could be included, as appropriate, in a legally binding instrument. The Group has also considered possible elements for structured discussions on scientific and technical cooperation under article X of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Notwithstanding the progress that I have outlined, the Ad Hoc Group was not able to complete its work or submit its report, which includes a draft of the future legally binding instrument, to the States Parties for consideration at the Fourth Review Conference. In this context, it is noted that the cumulative period allocated to substantive negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group was eight weeks. In order to fulfil its mandate, the Ad Hoc Group has decided to intensify its work with a view to completing it as soon as

possible before the commencement of the Fifth Review Conference and to submit its report, which will be adopted by consensus, to be considered by the States Parties at a special conference.

In its future work, the Ad Hoc Group will build upon materials contained in the papers of the Friends of the Chair, which are attached to its recent report and to those of previous sessions.

In order to intensify its work, the Ad Hoc Group decided to hold three three-week sessions over the next 12 months. I encourage and invite States Parties that have not yet done so to join the negotiations in the light of their anticipated intensification. I express the hope that the Ad Hoc Group's further progress in fulfilling its mandate will be characterized by the same degree of constructive cooperation that has been shown to date.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for today.

I call on the representative of South Africa to make a statement.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): It is an honour for me to inform the Committee of a statement on joint positions reached between South Africa and Sweden on disarmament, following ministerial talks in Cape Town today, 17 October 1996. The statement, which is based on the commitment of South Africa and Sweden to achieving a world free of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery and to addressing the proliferation of conventional weapons covered, *inter alia*, the following issues. It welcomed the adoption and signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and noted our common belief that further steps are needed in the programme to bring the world closer to the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. It underlined the importance of the early commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament for a convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

The statement noted the great importance that we attach to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the strengthened review process. It emphasized the importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones and welcomed the signing of the Pelindaba Treaty for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa. It welcomed the imminent entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and declared our support for the work to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. We expressed our concern at the destabilizing build-up of conventional weapons and our commitment to working together to ensure that this important matter receives the necessary attention and priority in the various disarmament forums.

The statement declared that we attach the utmost importance to a comprehensive prohibition on all anti-personnel landmines. Finally, it declared our commitment to reinforcing international cooperation and national capacities for mine-clearance. It is our intention to circulate the full text of the statement to members of the Committee at a later date.

The Chairman: I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I wish to exercise my right of reply to the statement of the representative of South Korea. I again declare that the South Korean authorities are not qualified to talk about nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula. The South Korean authorities are the traitors to the nation who introduced nuclear weapons from the United States to the living ground of our nation. My delegation was surprised at the ignorance of the South Korean representative with regard to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. Perhaps he is feigning ignorance.

The Agreed Framework between Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States clearly stipulates at what stage we are to fulfil certain obligations according to the agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). But the Agreed Framework has still not been implemented. We are, however, cooperating eagerly and actively with the IAEA, in accordance with the agreement. In fact, we are overdoing it.

Perhaps the South Korean representative is ignorant of the Agreed Framework because South Korea is not qualified to participate in the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. It would be better for the South Korean representative to educate himself with regard to the Agreed Framework.

As for the North-South Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, we have found out that the settlement of the nuclear issue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States is a prerequisite, because South Korea, the colony, has no say with regard to the nuclear weapons of the suzerain State, the United States. When the nuclear issue is settled between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

and the United States, the North-South Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula will be implemented automatically and smoothly.

Mr. Paek (Republic of Korea): Instead of responding point by point to the remarks of the representative of North Korea, let me set the record straight be further explaining our position on North Korea's non-compliance with the safeguard agreement which it freely entered into with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

North Korea has again used the Geneva Agreed Framework as an excuse for non-compliance with the safeguard agreement under the NPT. Its excuse is absurd and unacceptable to all signatories to the NPT. The Agreed Framework is a bilateral arrangement signed with the United States, just as the South-North Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was signed between the two Koreas. North Korea, of course, has bilateral legal obligations to abide by both agreements. We have no doubt that, if fully implemented, these bilateral agreements would constitute an important supplement to the global non-proliferation regime, which could contribute to the ultimate resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

It must be pointed out that we are dealing here with the North Korean issue in the multilateral context, with respect to North Korea's multilateral obligation towards all Parties to the NPT to comply with the safeguard agreement. For the sake of the credibility and integrity of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the IAEA safeguards system, it is most appropriate for the United Nations, as an Organization with global responsibilities and competence, to draw attention to the only case in the world of continuing non-compliance with the safeguards obligation.

We reiterate our position that bilateral agreements cannot replace, supersede or detract from North Korea's multilateral obligations to all Parties to the NPT. It is in this context that we have repeatedly urged North Korea promptly to enter into full compliance with its safeguards obligations under the NPT, in addition to its compliance with the Agreed Framework and the South-North Joint Declaration on Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. Kim Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The representative of South Korea once again exposed his ignorance. The Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) warmly welcomed the Agreed Framework between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. The Agreed Framework clearly stipulates what we must do in accordance with the IAEA agreement. Again, I would like to advise the South Korean authorities to refrain from trying to poke their nose into the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, which we are trying to resolve with the United States.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.